1: Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

was called, and the couple were left alone, while outside the villagers danced and sang of fertility all night. 585

In the morning the man's brothers come to the house to find out if she had ever before been to the hammock with another man. 831 585 626

"What happens if they find that she has?"

Bayo's reply was prompt. "Usually nothing. The man doesn't give her as many presents as he would have given her. If he had promised her thirty pangi, he would only give her fourteen. If he liked her, he wouldn't turn her away."

"What would happen to her, though? Would they punish her?"

"They say, Bak'a, sometimes a man likes her better for it. It shows him other men had cared for her. But her family scolds her, and sometimes punishes her, too, and the women of the village talk plenty. They pull their lip at her the next morning, and later, whenever there is a quarrel, they talk about it again."

But if the girl were found to have been a virgin, then all the people danced, and there was a great feast, with dances to all the gods.

"You must come back for my wedding, Bak'a, you and your woman. Then you will see dancing!" 585

"But your girl is still a child, Bayo."

"Ah, no. She is getting her cuts on her thighs. She wears a cloth." He knew, because on his way down from the Granman he had stopped at her village and when the family was not about he had made sure. "If you come next year, we will both be ready." 881

The two men still followed the bush trail when Bayo had finished his account of how the marriage was conducted. Now and then Tross would appear, wag his tail, and be off into the underbrush again. 000

"Tell me, Bayo," the white man began, "do many girls go with a man to the hammock before they are married?" 836

He waited for a moment before he answered. Smiling, he ran his hand over his newly braided head with the innumerable little braids between the lines of white.

"About half of them, I guess," he said.

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8

of some other woman, and exercises authority over her children rather than over his own.

The Djuka family, then, consists of a group of people all descended from a single woman, and related to each other through the female line. Whatever family authority exists resides in the mother's or grandmother's brothers; to them the children defer; from them the children will inherit property and title. The paternity of the children is unessential. This type of social organization is called matrilineal.

We should, perhaps, not expect to find romantic love, as we know it, among the Djukas. The peculiar transports and attenuated delights of romantic passion are a rather extraordinary phenomenon which, according to Briffault, does not exist outside of Western civilization. Romance requires a high development of individuality among women so that one may be desirable above all others. Where women are mutually interchangeable, romance cannot exist. The Djuka black does not love a woman; he loves women. Love among the Djukas is not a brainstorm but a physiological release, and marriage an economic device.

The young people have complete knowledge and some experience of sex at an extremely early age and are usually married at sixteen or seventeen. They are fairly promiscuous before marriage and extremely so afterward. This, again according to Briffault, is the rule in tribes retaining the matrilineal tradition. Since intercourse before marriage is a practice that the Djukas make little effort to restrain, sex is a common affair, not particularly connected with marriage.

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8

It is indulged in as naturally as the other bodily functions.

"Marriage" is a convenient term for describing cohabitation among the Djukas, but it must be remembered that to them marriage is a purely economic institution. There is little ceremony. No one objects to getting married, because divorce is instantaneous and easy. The bonds of marriage are loose, and adultery, to use our harsh term, is customary.

Courting consists in presenting the prospective bride with elaborate wood carvings of useful implements. This wood carving has been developed by the Djukas to a high point of artistic perfection, as can be seen from the illustrative specimens, of which more will be said later. The approaching marriage is not looked upon as a departure from the maternal group; it is simply an arrangement for providing the man with a cook and the woman with children. The marriage of a captain or a Granman differs in no wise from any other; no especial care is taken of his bride.

We encountered two varieties of the process of choosing a husband. In the first, the girl has little to say, her husband being selected for her by her parents. In the second and more frequent practice the woman marries the man of her own choice, the parents making sure that the intended husband is a good provider. But since every Djuka buck is trained to the jungle crafts from childhood, this requirement can almost be taken for granted.

The husband marries frequently. He may marry outside of his village, or outside of his lo, but never outside of the tribe. Marriage requires a bride price, consisting of pieces of

/126 cont./

651 553 The only case in which custom governs the choice of name is that of twins.

Male twins are called Adam and Agosu.

Boy and girl twins are called Adam and Efa (2).

[197]

2. This is connected with a myth derived from the Biblical tradition, which we shall set forth later.

Female twins are called Chimba and Sisi.

Social Relations within the Lineage

429 604 [593] Guardianship. Until he is old enough to work, the child is placed under the responsibility of the mother and, one step farther away, that of the eldest of his classificatory uncles. To a lesser degree all the uncles have authority over the child; guardianship is collective.

The custom of the Refugee Blacks, hostile to any division of the lineage, does not recognize any right peculiar to the mother's brothers (still, in fact, they seem to be consulted by [584] preference about matters of small importance). For serious matters, such as authorizing a marriage, the classificatory uncles meet and deliberate; they do not vote, strictly speaking, but the proved opposition of three or four of them causes the project to be abandoned.

429 593 604 [836] It is to the mother that people will come to complain about the child, and not to the father. She it is who decides to refer the thing to the uncles if it is serious (example of Doni, 18 years old, who deflowered Elina, 15 years old. Elina's mother came to complain to Doni's mother. Doni's mother went to notify her older brother Fintiman, who took the matter in hand).

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582 Generally speaking, the custom of the Refugee Blacks used to consider as immoral the marriage of a very young girl to an old man, or of a very young boy to an adult woman. 588 178 The weakening of family morals is clearly demonstrated by two events which happened during the summer of 1960. A boy of thirteen and a half, K... of Boniville, left his guardian to join an Assisi woman, A...., 20 years older than he and with a very bad reputation to boot; some months later his example was imitated /146/ by a boy of 14 who began living with a [684] [613] woman of 29. Nothing like that had ever been seen, and people inveighed against the scandal of it; but in both cases, guardians and lineage heads showed themselves incapable of making their authority respected by force.

882 [562] Marriage of girls. It can still be said (although things are in the process of changing rapidly) that girls, kweyi umɛ, occupy a place apart in the thought of the Refugee Blacks; the reprobation which embraces women does not extend to them. 882 834 [291] People say that girls "have good manners," and in fact most of them, although naked except for a little apron, have a reserved attitude, a becoming bearing, which contrast with the attitude of the married women. To tell the truth, this virtue is not so much due to natural inclinations as to the strict [593] vigilance with which their mothers surround them. The mothers literally do not let them out of their sight and permit no man to speak to them out of their presence. "Until dawn, until the cock crows, she keeps vigil," says the song, alluding to the mother who watches over her daughter's virtue. If a girl [836] [597] comes to lose her virginity without being properly married, pɔti na su, "established in a house," it is a dishonor for her mother and her near relatives.

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583 A girl's marriage does not involve any dowry in the African sense of the term, but it involves payment of the price of virginity to the mother. This payment is made after consummation of the marriage (or after defloration if there has been a clandestine union). It consists of seven pieces of cloth, a demijohn of tafia, and various imported objects (the whole representing in 1958 about 8,000 francs, which is relatively small for the Refugee Blacks). It really has to do with the price of virginity, for nothing is paid back if there is a break-up. The man moreover gives the girl white beads /possibly "pearls" --Tr./, red cloth, and sweetmeats which constitute the payment of her akka.

[429] The price of virginity is paid to the person who has raised the girl, even if it is a man. This person divides it equally with the mother or, if the latter is dead, with the mother's sisters.

For example, for O Balkom (D,u, F10), brought up by her father Malobi in Loka village, her husband Moomu (Kotika) paid the price of virginity to Malobi who shared it with his wife Bénati.

[604] [613] No payment is made to the uncles or to the head of the lineage.

• 836 [599] The fact that a girl may carry on a clandestine affair and be deflowered without having been properly proposed to is considered a shame for the mother; but if the seducer confesses and pays the price of virginity, honor is restored.

Defloration does not necessarily entail marriage, for the seducer does not always intend to take on the maintenance of a household.

If the girl is deflowered too young, her mother does not give her the pagi and continues to forbid her to have sexual relations, for she fears that she may become pregnant. Now for 848 568 a girl, becoming pregnant without having concluded a contract of maintenance with a man is an extreme shame, for that means she is not worth anything.

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848 If the girl is pregnant, the man may not abandon her: that would make a great to-do between the two kin groups: he must stay with her at least until the birth of the child.

883 836 178 [582] Nowadays among the Boni things tend to happen completely otherwise than custom makes provision for. The general opinion is that girls can no longer be held down, that they escape more and more from the authority of their mothers; many of them begin to run wild at about 14 or 15, and people are obliged to marry them off precipitately at 15 or 16. It is difficult to say what the proportion of these hasty marriages is, but the recriminations heard on all sides on the subject of the shamelessness of girls give the idea that it is increasing. In the [582] villages on the French bank, out of nine girls married in 1958 [848] there were only four marriages concluded according to regulations; the five others had been arranged hastily either because the girl was pregnant (two cases) or because she had laid herself open to scandal. /148/

582 Nearly all girls married between 1952 and 1956 were 15 to 17 years old.

584 This is about how things happen:

A man who is attracted by a girl tries to exchange a few [537] words with her unknown to her mother. There are special forms for these declarations. One speaks in a low voice, very fast, using special formulas. This is how one of our boatmen, one evening in October, 1952, addressed young Lomé, age 15, of Booiville village, who had gotten away from her mother on the pretext of going to get water for us.

584 539 "Woman, I love thee, I wish to live with thee, I wish to marry thee. That which God put in me I cannot take away (1).

1. Which means: I cannot change, you must take me as I am.

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584 539 I do not know whether thou lovest me, whether thou will answer yes or no; perhaps I am not so handsome as thou, but I cannot help loving thee. If thou lovest me, tell me clearly. I have come, I have attached my boat to a rock, I have wet my feet before reaching land (2)."

2. High-flown words to which no precise meaning can be attached; it is a kind of verbal music whose formulas vary infinitely.

"Come back tomorrow, come back, I cannot answer thee today, I cannot."

"I know for today, but not for tomorrow (3); yield to me, be mine, I shall give thee the garment (4)."

3. One must understand: It is necessary to decide today.

4. The man lays down one of his garments at the home of the woman who has agreed to marry him.

584 Our departure on our tour the next day put an end to his attempts for the time being!

836 584 It often happens that the girl allows herself to be seduced; her mother soon learns of it from the village people. She flies into a passion, beats her daughter to obtain a confession without [558] which she can obtain nothing from the supposed seducer. It is an extreme shame for a mother not to receive the price of her

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836 684 [558] daughter's virginity: the other women will make fun of her and as for the men, they will be unanimous in laughing cruelly at the new trick played on the women. Now certain girls refuse obstinately to confess, or they have already had several adventures, so that nobody succeeds in knowing the truth. After many recriminations and arguments the affair proceeds no further.

If it has been possible to identify the seducer with certainty, the mother, arming herself with a stick, goes from village to village to find him; his uncles intervene and end by settling the business by asking the mother to accept, since there is nothing else to do, the payment for virginity. This sum absolutely must be paid; if the young man were not able to do it, his uncles would pay it for him even if they have to turn against him ultimately. The mother accepts the payment, honor is safe.

583 In many cases the couple consider themselves as joined, at least temporarily; the man prepares, if he is hard working, to build a house for his wife. If he is not hard working, he simply promises to make one for her some day; in reality he has spared himself this great labor; the woman will have to wait for years unless her mother or one of her uncles dies, bequeathing her his or her house. /149/

836 684 Observation in Boniville in October, 1956:

A village woman comes to complain to Fintiman that his nephew and ward Doni has deflowered her daughter Elina, 15 years old, in July of the same year. She learned it indirectly, and the daughter expressly confessed it. Doni admitted the facts; he promised to pay the indemnity at the end of the border-fixing mission when he has received his pay. Elina continues to wear the kwey until further orders and does not show any embarrassment. Doni comes back in the evening. I hear Fintiman reprimand him, but only for form's sake: "Deflowering a girl when one does not intend to live with her is something which is

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836 684 not done." He advises Doni above all to remit to the girl the payment of her akka, namely two camisas, a string of white beads which she will wear on her left wrist, and a bottle of syrup which she will offer to her akka while drinking it. Doni does not bother to face the mother and does not intend to see the girl again; it is his sister Maria who will attend to the errand.

That done, the mother will accept the fait accompli and will not show her anger. She will wait for the payment.

584 836 One also hears talk rather often of the clandestine consummation of a properly arranged marriage, the engaged couple wishing thus to force the hand of their guardians and obtain their freedom sooner.

587 Remarriage of widows or divorcées. It does not give rise to any payment, but the marriage proposal is made to the woman's uncles and the head of her lineage in the same form as for a girl. In such a case it is no longer a question of asking for an authorization (a man would have to have the worst reputation for the woman's lineage to refuse the marriage) but to obtain the benediction of the ancestors on the household. Moreover, it is [613] very important for the heads of both lineages to be notified of this marriage, for in case of the death of husband or wife the other will have to bear the weight of the mourning.

581 Women are guided in their choice by sensual attraction but largely also by self-interest. They take care to marry a man who has, as it is said among us, some future, a position. The owners of outboard motors do not fail to pass at reduced speed by the villages in order to be admired by the women.

Men who have a reputation for "working hard" (for work is the sole wealth in Boni country) are frequently chosen by girls even though they may have one or two wives already.

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586 [128] The estimate of the average number of divorces for women born before 1896 is probably lower than the actual number, their first divorces not being well known to our informants. It is probably in the neighborhood of two.

586 593 178 The increase in frequency of divorces among young women is striking. It is related to the weakening of the authority, very strong in former times, exercised by mothers over their daughters.

Here are two examples concerning two girls we have known since their childhood.

• 836 Lomé (L2, F74, Boniville) born in 1938, began to cause people to talk about her in 1954. She was deflowered by N...., who did not want to marry her. Then she had relations with Asadam (K, Boniville), who didnot want to marry her either. She was beaten; she continued to see him. Now this is extremely shameful for a girl because it is placing herself in a state [558] of inferiority with respect to a man, when her self-respect consists in making a contract between equals.

582 Her brother Amèmbé beather, and she ended up by marrying Pitipiti (Aw.B.2, Asisi village), who formally asked 586 for her in marriage in 1956. This marriage lasted less than a 589 year. In 1957 Lomé divorced him to marry Djoni (Kotika village).

584 Aguba (D u, G14), girl of Asisi-Dju village, born in 1941, had been proposed to with the customary formalities in May, 1956 by Paltiki (L2, Loka village), a young man of 18. It was 584 agreed that the engaged couple would wait two years. But 585 Paltiki did not wait and consummated the marriage clandestinely at the end of a few months. Benga, Aguba's aunt and [429] guardian, became very angry and beat her. She did not give her the [illegible] until May, 1957. The marriage lasted only a few 586 months. /157/ By the end of 1957 Aguba was breaking off with Paltiki and beginning openly to look for adventures.

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589 [589] A woman who has just been divorced does not remarry immediately. Several months, sometimes a year or more, may go by between two unions, a period during which she thinks only of "living it up," indulging in all the adventures she wishes. This attitude is considered normal, and the elders have nothing to say to her provided that she does not fall into pikadu, or cause any scandal, and that the period does not last too long.

[586] We have cited the example of Aguba, a pretty girl of 18, who at the end of 1957 had just broken with her husband Patfiki /sic/ after only one year of living together. She was living with Lenga who brought her up; she was cutting a small clearing herself. Beyond that, she had no other concern but to indulge in all the adventures she liked. Men used to come to solicit her favors discreetly, each one reserving his day. From one she would ask for a camisa, from another, soap, kerosene, etc.

[836] [429] Her guardian Lenga used to press her to take another husband, but she could not forbid her to live thus, having given with the Lenga her freedom as a woman.

[587] She contracted a new marriage in May or June, 1958 after leading an irregular life for more than six months.

836 As a matter of fact, things go on with great discretion. A man is notified in secret by his sister or /female/ cousin that such-and-such a woman noticed him during a dance, that she will await him at her home on such-and-such a night. At night on the river, one perceives boats which pass close to the shore, [504] advancing silently. In each village there are secondary landings which allow nocturnal visitors to arrive at night without being noticed and to leave again before dawn. /158/

[584] If a woman lacks this discretion and if her life is openly dissolute, her mother will beat her and the head of the lineage will inflict punishments on her, but she will not be sent away; in no case can anyone be expelled from his natal village.

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848 If children are born of these irregular liaisons, the mother
[784] takes care to know with certainty who the father is, for if there
[753] were any doubt, the child, respecting a kina which would not
be his own, would contract leprosy. On this subject the Boni
842 have a remarkable belief: they think that it is the first man
with whom a woman has had relations after the end of a menstrual
period who is likely to make her pregnant.

836 These adventures always involve gifts in kind (cloth,
431 jewels); so the men who have the most success with women
are always short of money.

581 A woman who has lived thus in notorious fashion has a
little more difficulty than another in finding another husband,
but if she is young and winsome she succeeds.

548 Prostitution as such is very rare in Boni country, and the
women who give themselves over to it openly (three or four for
all the villages on the French bank) have generally left the
[836] tribe to settle in the gold miners' villages. Dissoluteness is
not considered dishonorable by the Refugee Blacks when it is
carried on within the tribe and when it has no other purpose but
pleasure; but prostitution is judged shameful.

834 Except for these few prostitutes, we have never heard it
648 said that a Boni woman had relations with a European; on this
point tribal discipline is observed with extreme rigor.

581 Conclusion. The average duration of marriages, which was
[178] from 15 to 20 years for the preceding generation, tends to be-
come shorter and can be estimated nowadays at about ten years.
[191] In spite of this evolution, the stability of marriages among the
Refugee Blacks remains noticeably greater than that observed
548 among the black populations of South America. Among them
is not seen the form of prostitution so widespread in South
America, the supported mistress who does not work and who
lives entirely at the expense of her successive lovers.